

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SCA-01

IO-10 NIC-01 ACDA-05 SAJ-01 EB-07 CPR-01 PPT-01 VO-03

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R 272025Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 603

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

USMISSION USBERLIN UNN

C O N F I D E N T I A L BERLIN 5459

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PFOR, MILI, GE, WB, EB, US, UK, FR, GW

SUBJECT: TRAVEL POLICY IN GDR AND IN BERLIN: DOCUMENTATION
FOR US EMBASSY DEPENDENTS UNDER 14 YEARS OF AGE

REF: BERLIN 5132

1. SUMMARY. THE GDR DOES NOT NOW PROVIDE IDENTIFICATION DOCUMENTS TO DIPLOMATIC CHILDREN UNDER 14. AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THIS GDR POLICY, SOME EMBASSY DEPENDENT CHILDREN USE THEIR INDIVIDUAL DIPLOMATIC PASSPORTS WHEN PASSING THROUGH SECTOR-TO-SECTOR CHECKPOINTS TWICE DAILY ON THE EMBASSY SCHOOL BUS RUN TO ATTEND THE AMERICAN SCHOOLS IN WEST BERLIN. WE ARE CONCERNED WITH THE POSSIBLE LOSS OF U.S. DIPLOMATIC PASSPORTS OR THEIR STAMPING BY GDR GUARDS AT SECTOR CHECKPOINTS. THIS SITUATION REQUIRES EARLY RESOLUTION, AND THE EMBASSY INTENDS TO PROPOSE A SOLUTION TO THE GDR AUTHORITIES IN THE NEAR FUTURE. DEPARTMENT'S REVIEWS REQUESTED. END SUMMARY.

2. IN ADDRESSING THE DAY-TO-DAY PROCEDURAL PROBLEMS
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OF ESTABLISHING AN AMERICAN EMBASSY AND OFFICIAL

AMERICAN HOUSEHOLDS IN EAST BERLIN, ONE MATTER THAT WE HAVE KEPT CONSTANTLY IN VIEW HAS BEEN THE ALLIED POSITION ON THE QUADRIPARTITE STATUS OF BERLIN AND, MORE SPECIFICALLY, ALLIED PRACTICE REGARDING MOVEMENT BETWEEN THE EASTERN AND WESTERN SECTORS OF BERLIN. THESE MATTERS WHICH ARE FUNDAMENTAL TO THE ALLIED POSITION IN BERLIN, ON THE ONE HAND, AND GDR POLICIES AND PRACTICES ON THE OTHER, OCCASIONALLY CLASH, ADVERSELY AFFECTING OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE EMBASSY AND ITS PERSONNEL RESIDENT IN EAST BERLIN. ONE SUCH INSTANCE INVOLVES THE MOVEMENT OF EMBASSY DEPENDENT CHILDREN UNDER FOURTEEN THROUGH SECTOR-TO-SECTOR CHECKPOINTS EITHER FOR SCHOOLING, HEALTH OR RECREATIONAL PURPOSES. THE GDR DOES NOT PROVIDE IDENTIFICATION DOCUMENTS TO ANY DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL UNDER FOURTEEN. CONSEQUENTLY EMBASSY DEPENDENTS UNDER FOURTEEN HAVE BEEN USING THEIR INDIVIDUAL DIPLOMATIC PASSPORTS TO PASS BACK AND FORTH THROUGH THE WALL.. TO MINIMIZE THE POSSIBILITY OF PASSPORT LOSS OR STAMPING OF DIPLOMATIC PASSPORTS BY GDR SECTOR BOUNDARY GUARDS, EMBASSY MOTHERS HAVE BEEN ACCOMPANYING CHILDREN ON THE DAILY BUS RUN TO WEST BERLIN. THIS USUALLY INVOLVES TWO ROUND TRIPS PER DAY FOR THE ESCORT MOTHER AND IS A STRAIN AND BURDEN DIRECTLY ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE DIVIDED STATUS OF THE CITY, ALLIED PRACTICES, AS WELL AS GDR POLICIES.

3. WE HAVE BEEN LIVING WITH THIS SITUATION FOR OVER THREE MONTHS NOW, AND IT HAS BECOME CLEAR THAT IT CANNOT CONTINUE INDEFINITELY. HENCE, SOME IDENTIFICATION DOCUMENT OTHER THAN A DIPLOMATIC PASSPORT WILL HAVE TO BE FOUND SO THAT DEPENDENT CHILDREN CAN USE SUCH A DOCUMENT WHILE ON THE SCHOOL BUS RUN (AND ONLY IN THE COMPANY OF THE EAST GERMAN BUS DRIVER) WITHOUT INCURRING THE UNACCEPTABLE RISK OF PASSPORT LOSS OR STAMPING BY THE GDR AUTHORITIES. THIS SAME DOCUMENT COULD BE USED WHEN ACCOMPANYING THEIR PARENTS THROUGH THE CHECKPOINTS FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

4. SINCE USE OF THE YELLOW U.S. FORCES CARD IS NOT A CONFIDENTIAL

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SUITABLE IDENTIFICATION DOCUMENT FOR EMBASSY PERSONNEL OR THEIR DEPENDENTS (REFTEL), TWO OPTIONS AS CONCERNS ERSATZ DOCUMENTATION ARE POSSIBLE. BOTH OF THESE WOULD OBVIOUSLY REQUIRE THE APPROVAL OF THE COMPETENT GDR AUTHORITIES. THE FIRST AND MORE DESIRABLE OPTION IN OUR VIEW, SINCE IT WOULD ACCORD THE SAME STATUS TO MINOR DEPENDENTS AS IT DOES TO PRINCIPALS, WOULD BE TO PREVAIL UPON THE GDR TO ISSUE

AN IDENTIFICATION DOCUMENT WHICH CAN BE USED IN LIEU OF A U.S. DIPLOMATIC PASSPORT IN PASSING THROUGH SECTOR-TO-SECTOR CHECKPOINTS. THE OTHER OPTION, SOMEWHAT LESS DESIRABLE THAN THE FIRST SINCE IT INVOLVES THE CREATION OF A NEW DOCUMENT DESIGNED SPECIFICALLY TO OVERCOME A LOCAL PROBLEM, WOULD BE THE PREPARATION OF AN EMBASSY CARD OR DOCUMENT WHICH COULD EITHER BE ACCEPTED BY THE GDR AUTHORITIES AND/OR BE SUITABLY AUTHENTICATED BY THEM. THE FIRST OPTION WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH THE GDR PRACTICE OF PROVIDING IDENTIFICATION DOCUMENTATION TO FOREIGN DIPLOMATS AND THEIR DEPENDENTS OVER FOURTEEN. WE WOULD PROPOSE THE SECOND OPTION ONLY IF THE GDR AUTHORITIES REFUSED OR WOULD BE UNWILLING TO ACCEDE TO OUR PREFERRED OPTION. IN EITHER CASE, WE WOULD WANT TO OBTAIN AN UNRESTRICTED IDENTIFICATION DOCUMENT WHICH WOULD ALLOW PASSAGE THROUGH SECTOR CHECKPOINTS FOR A VARIETY OF PURPOSES.

5. WE CANNOT FORESEE HOW THE GDR AUTHORITIES WILL HANDLE THIS REQUEST. FROM A BRIEF MENTION OF THE SUBJECT DURING A ROUTINE CALL BY EMBASSY OFFICERS ON THE CONSULAR DEPARTMENT OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS IN LATE JANUARY 1975, WE ARE INCLINED TO BELIEVE THAT THE SUBJECT HAS NOT BEEN GIVEN ANY SERIOUS CONSIDERATION BY THOSE GDR OFFICIALS WHO DEAL WITH CONSULAR MATTERS ON A DAY-TO-DAY BASIS. THEY APPEARED, HOWEVER, TO BE AMENABLE TO CONSIDERING SERIOUSLY ANY REQUEST WHICH THE EMBASSY MIGHT MAKE IN THIS REGARD.

6. ALTHOUGH OUR BRITISH AND FRENCH ALLIES IN EAST BERLIN ARE SUBJECT TO THE SAME TRAVEL POLICY, THEIR
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SITUATION IS CONSIDERABLY DIFFERENT AND NOT DIRECTLY RELEVANT TO THE PROBLEMS WE HAVE ENCOUNTERED. THE BRITISH, FOR EXAMPLE, HAVE ONLY ONE SCHOOL-AGED CHILD AT PRESENT WHO IS CHAUFFEUR-DRIVEN TO SCHOOL IN WEST BERLIN. THE FRENCH HAVE ABOUT THE SAME NUMBER OF CHILDREN ATTENDING SCHOOL IN WEST BERLIN THAT WE HAVE, BUT FRENCH PASSPORTS FOR CHILDREN DIFFER FROM THOSE FOR ADULTS. THE FRENCH CHILDREN'S PASSPORT IS A LARGE SINGLE PIECE OF PARCHMENT BEARING A PHOTO AND APPROPRIATE INFORMATION ABOUT THE BEARER. WE ARE TOLD THIS PASSPORT IS FOLDED TO REVEAL ONLY THE PHOTO WHEN USED FOR SECTOR CROSSINGS IN BERLIN.

7. THE EMBASSY INTENDS TO RAISE THE SUBJECT OF DOCUMENTATION FOR CHILDREN UNDER FOURTEEN WITH

APPROPRIATE GDR OFFICIALS. FOR REASONS GIVEN ABOVE, WE BELIEVE OBTAINING AN IDENTIFICATION CARD OR DOCUMENT FOR SUCH CHILDREN, WHICH IS EITHER APPROVED OR ISSUED BY GDR AUTHORITIES (AS DESCRIBED IN PARAGRAPH 4). IS NECESSARY TO REPLACE THE USE OF U.S. DIPLOMATIC PASSPORTS FOR DAILY SECTOR CROSSINGS WITHIN BERLIN.

8. SINCE MANY MATTERS WITHIN THE GDR GOVERNMENT ARE HANDLED INITIALLY ON A POLITICAL BASIS, WE WOULD PLAN TO RAISE THE SUBJECT FIRST OF ALL WITH APPROPRIATE POLITICAL OFFICERS IN THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. DEPENDING ON THE REACTION, WE MIGHT THEN CARRY THE MATTER FURTHER, PRESUMABLY TO THE CONSULAR DEPARTMENT OF THE SAME MINISTRY. WASHINGTON COMMENTS ON THIS PROPOSED APPROACH, WHICH WE WOULD INTEND TO MAKE IN THE NEAR FUTURE, ARE NECESSARY AND WOULD BE WELCOME.COOPER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLICIES, DEMARCHE, TRAVEL CONTROLS, BERLIN TRIPARTITE MATTERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 MAR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BERLIN05459
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750108-0706
From: BERLIN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750311/aaaaajmt.tel
Line Count: 187
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 BERLIN 5132
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <30 MAY 2003 by ifshinsr>; APPROVED <07 OCT 2003 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TRAVEL POLICY IN GDR AND IN BERLIN: DOCUMENTATION FOR US EMBASSY DEPENDENTS UNDER 14 YEARS OF AGE
TAGS: PGOV, PFOR, MILI, GC, WB, US, UK, FR, GE
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006